United Nations A/57/119

General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 June 2002

Original: English

Fifty-seventh session
Item 22 (f) of the preliminary list*
Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations: cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

On 7 December 2001, the General Assembly adopted resolution 56/44, in which it invited the United Nations system, its relevant bodies and the international community to continue to provide technical assistance, as appropriate, to the States members of the Economic Cooperation Organization and its secretariat in strengthening their early warning systems, preparedness, capacity for timely responses and rehabilitation, with a view to reducing human casualties and mitigating the socio-economic impact of natural disasters.

In the same resolution, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session a report on the implementation of the resolution. The present report provides a brief resume of the status of the cooperative relationship between the Economic Cooperation Organization and various United Nations organizations during 2001 and 2002.

* A/57/50/Rev.1.

02-44859 (E) 240702

I. Background

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/44 of 7 December 2001 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). In that resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution. The report provides a brief resume of the status of the cooperative relationship between ECO and various United Nations organizations during 2001 and 2002.

II. Status of the cooperative relationship between the Economic Cooperation Organization and various United Nations organizations

United Nations Development Programme

2. The United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) has provided financial and technical assistance valued at US$ 1 million for capacity-building of the ECO secretariat. The multi-State consultancies in the priority fields of ECO and training courses of ECO staff were introduced in the project, which had terminated by the end of 2001. The ECO secretariat library, along with its information technology system, was also upgraded. The unspent amount of the allocated fund for the project has been allocated to the priority projects of ECO in the fields of transport and trade for future cooperation with UNDP in the year 2002.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

3. ECO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) are endeavouring to implement the provisions of a memorandum of understanding between them. Currently, both organizations are involved in: (a) implementation of the joint ECO/UNCTAD/Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)/Islamic Development Bank (IDB) project on multimodal transport; and (b) provision of technical assistance b UNCTAD to ECO in developing a regional investmer agreement.

4. UNCTAD was instrumental in drafting an preparing a project document entitled "Importance c trade efficiency and trade management in the EC region". ECO is endeavouring to revive the projec with the assistance of UNCTAD and UNDP.

5. In a meeting held in Geneva on 23 April 200 between the heads of the two organizations, it wa agreed to build further on the existing cooperation wit respect to formulating joint approaches in developin programmes that would attract the support of the don agencies. During that meeting, the issue reconstruction of Afghanistan also came und discussion. The Secretary-General of UNCTA expressed his full commitment to supporting an initiative that ECO may undertake in future, aimed ameliorating the situation in Afghanistan.

International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC)

6. A trade flow analysis of the countries in th region was presented during an International Trad Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) mission to the EC secretariat in March 2000. The ITC analysis outline existing trade potentials in the region to boost the lev of intraregional trade from its current ratio of about 6 per cent. A project on promoting ECO trade b organizing a meeting of buyers and sellers has starte The first buyers/sellers meeting of business peop from the textiie and clothing sector took place Istanbul in October 2001. The next buyers/sellir meeting on agriculture and food products will be he in the first half of 2003 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. It anticipated that the project will have a positive impa on intraregional trade and in respect of enhanci business contacts among member States' tradi companies.

7. The same project also envisages the holding of meeting of the "ECO Business Forum", which wou provide a platform to the business community of ECO member States for presenting their vie collectively to the leaders of member States on t sidelines of the seventh ECO Summit and Twel Meeting of the Council of Ministers, scheduled to held from 9 to 14 October 2002.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

8. ESCAP and ECO continue to engage in dialogue with a view to strengthening the cooperative relationship in the areas of mutual interests. To this end, the Secretary-General of ECO participated in the fifty-eighth session of ESCAP held in Bangkok in May 2002. A number of potential activities for joint implementation were identified during the visit. ECO will also be invited to make a substantive contribution to the fourteenth meeting of the Steering Group of the Committee on Regional Economic Cooperation scheduled to be held in Bangkok in November 2002, as the Meeting will focus on trade and investment issues for South Asia, which covers some ECO member countries, namely, Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

9. In its *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 2002*,[1] ESCAP analysed the impact of the dramatic global slowdown upon the economic performance of the 10 member countries of ECO. The *Survey* also highlighted the needs of developing member countries of ESCAP, including the ECO member countries, in respect of achieving the millennium development goals of poverty eradication, universal primary education, promotion of gender equality and employment of women, reduction of child mortality and improvement of maternal health.

10. Under the ESCAP project on capacity-building for managing globalization, which covers all ECO member countries with economies in transition, ECO will be invited to participate substantially in some of the project activities. The project aims at facilitating the subregional, regional and global integration of these countries and enabling them to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities posed by globalization by strengthening their domestic capacity. The project has three components, namely, macroeconomic policy, trade policy and facilitation, and investment promotion and facilitation.

11. ESCAP will continue its cooperation and contribute to the ECO third seminar on trade and investment information networking to be held later in 2002 with an objective of establishing an ECO network for trade and investment information exchange.

12. ESCAP has continued its cooperation with ECO in the field of transport and commenced the implementation of the joint project on international multimodal transport operations in the ECO region. The project, financed by the Islamic Development Bank, is designed to identify physical and non-physical constraints on the smooth flow of transport, and to assist in institutional strengthening, capacity-building and facilitation.

13. In cooperation with ECO, the implementation of the project for capacity-building in developing interregional land and land-cum-sea transport linkages, as well as of the project for development of a regional intergovernmental agreement for the Asian Highway Network, has commenced.

14. ESCAP, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and ECO continued to cooperate under the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) in the field of transport facilitation and border-crossing movement, with ECO participating in the Programme's Project Working Group.

15. ECO and ESCAP have agreed to participate in the next phase of the Silk Road Area Development Project with the sole aim of securing more coordinated development of a transport network and transit arrangements in the ECO subregion.

16. ECO was represented by the Deputy Secretary-General of ECO in the third session of the ESCAP Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Development, held in Bangkok in October 2001, where a number of potential activities were identified for cooperation between the two organizations in the energy and environment sectors.

17. ECO was also represented at the ESCAP Regional Workshop to Finalize the Guidelines on Strategic Planning and Management of Natural Resources Development, held in Bangkok in December 2001. Cooperation with ECO is envisaged in the implementation of follow-up activities on the application of the Guidelines.

18. ECO contributed, through a resource person, to the International Training Course for Energy Managers from West and Central Asia, held in Ankara from 4 to 14 June 2002 within the framework of SPECA.

19. In the wake of the participation of an ECO secretariat representative in the twelfth session of the ESCAP Working Group of Statistical Experts, held in November 2001, the possibility of co-organizing a

subregional workshop on national accounts is being explored.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

20. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is assisting in the ECO effort to build capacity in small and medium-sized enterprises of member States. In this respect, a joint ECO/UNIDO International Centre for Science and High Technology seminar on technology management and technology transfer negotiations was held in Tehran from 23 to 26 June 2001, with the technical and financial assistance of UNIDO.

United Nations International Drug Control Programme

21. The first phase of a project to establish a Drug Control Coordination Unit in the ECO secretariat was completed in December 2000. During the implementation period, funds provided by the European Union (EU) and Japan were utilized, with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme as the project's executing agency. The United Nations Office for Project Services was associated with the project and provided the equipment. The following activities were undertaken:

(a) All member States introduced their national focal points;

(b) Two task force meetings on law enforcement and coordination of member States were held at Tehran from 26 to 28 February 2000;

(c) An inventory mission to all member States, except Afghanistan, was undertaken during April and May 2000;

(d) A provisional glossary of State and non-State actors active in the field of drug control was prepared and sent to member States;

(e) Provisional country profiles for 1999-2000 pertaining to the drug situation and provisional drug trends in the member States were circulated;

(f) A web site for the drug control coordination unit was designed and is in the process of being launched.

22. A draft document for the second phase of the project was signed on 14 June 2002. Based on the work of the first phase of the project, new activities are being planned and carried out with funds from EU.

United Nations Population Fund

23. Within the framework of the memorandum of understanding between ECO and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), five joint activities have taken place, the last being a conference held at Istanbul in May 2000 on expanding contraceptive choice and improving quality of reproductive health programmes. Currently both organizations are collaborating to organize a seminar on human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and adolescent health in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in 2002.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

24. Since 1997, ECO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have established a fruitful cooperation framework within which to achieve food security and sustainable agricultural development in the ECO region. ECO is benefiting extensively from the technical assistance of FAO in many aspects. The organizations have initiated Joint Identification Missions to selected ECO member countries to assess the possibility of preparing a regional project document on ECO cooperation in agriculture to be submitted for donor consideration.

25. Currently, ECO and FAO, through its Regional Office for the Near East, are working to elaborate a regional strategy for food security and agricultural development in the ECO region.

26. ECO has also been an institutional supporter of the World Food Summit: Five Years Later, held from 10 to 13 June 2002 in Rome. Besides participating in the Summit meeting, it took part in the side event of the Summit organized for the ECO region.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

27. **It is recommended that various specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and relevant international financial institutions join in their efforts towards implementation of economic programmes and projects of ECO.**

Notes

[1] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.F.25.